

VZCZCXRO4988
OO RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHNEH RUEHPW RUEHSL
DE RUEHNE #0225/01 0341013
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 031013Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9391
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1541
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 7259
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3925
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2134
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6681
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RHMCSUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 000225

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/01/2020

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [PARM](#) [IN](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: WHAT IS INDIA DOING IN AFGHANISTAN?

REF: A. 09 NEW DELHI 1722 (INDIAN AF-PAK ENGAGEMENT)

[1](#)B. NEW DELHI 163 (SRAP-RAO MEETING)

[1](#)C. NEW DELHI 162 (SRAP-NSA MEETING)

Classified By: Ambassador Tim Roemer. Reason: 1.4 (b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: India is proud of its ongoing "development partnership" with post-Taliban Afghanistan that began in late [1](#)2001. The GOI claims the sum of its performed and pledged assistance to date totals USD 1.3 billion, of which approximately one-third has been disbursed. India's civilian aid is channeled into three main areas: infrastructure development (roads, water, and electricity); capacity building (1300 annual college scholarships and civil service training grants); and humanitarian assistance (food and medical aid). A distinguishing characteristic of Indian civilian assistance is the hands-off manner in which it is implemented: other than showcase infrastructure projects and scholarships/civil service training performed in India, most Indian assistance is provided in the form of direct cash transfers to various Afghan government entities. GOI officials report that a "handful" of Afghan police have taken part in civil service training in the past, but India clearly would like to do more police-specific training. Indian officials also told us that about 150 Afghan National Army (ANA) personnel are past or current beneficiaries of various types of Indian training. The GOI will likely continue to provide significant assistance to Afghanistan, and may try to increase its bilateral security ties as the international community begins to draw down its presence. Post has serious reservations and deep longer-term concerns regarding increased military assistance from either India or Pakistan. Our overall strategy on Indian engagement in Afghanistan should encourage greater coordination and mutual transparency to avoid incompatible approaches between Indian assistance/training and that provided by the USG and other international partners. End Summary.

Civilian Assistance: Infrastructure Development

[1](#)2. (SBU) The showpiece of Indian infrastructure assistance is a completed 218 kilometer road from Delaram, a town in Nimruz province near the northwestern corner of Helmand, to Zaranj on the Iranian border. This road in turn links up with a road running from the Iranian port of Chahbahar, undoubtedly designed to reduce land-locked Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistani ports. When discussing GOI assistance to Afghanistan, Indian officials frequently note that Indians and Afghans were killed in terrorist attacks on road

construction crews, thus highlighting the shared sacrifice of both countries. In addition to the road, India is currently working on the Salma hydroelectric dam in Herat province as well as other power generation/transmission projects; has refurbished telecommunications infrastructure equipment in eleven provinces; and is constructing the new Afghan parliament building in Kabul.

Civilian Assistance: Capacity Building

¶3. (SBU) In order to develop Afghan human resource capacity, India provides 650 annual Indian university scholarships to Afghan students to pursue degree programs. MEA says the GOI also provides various types of technical and administrative training in India to 650 Afghan government personnel every year, including a "handful" of police officials. This sort of training lasts from 3 to 9 months. MEA officials say that the GOI is considering a sharp increase in both student scholarships and civil service training grants in the coming months. The GOI also places 20 Indian technical advisors in key Afghan ministries under a trilateral agreement with UNDP and the Afghan government.

¶4. (SBU) At the January 28 London Conference for Afghanistan, the GOI announced additional assistance for Afghanistan agriculture. India will provide 200 agricultural degree scholarships to Afghan students and 100 civil service training grants to agriculture officials (over and above the combined 1300 scholarships/training grants). The GOI also announced that it would work with UNDP and the Afghan

NEW DELHI 00000225 002 OF 003

government to enhance the existing ministerial capacity-building program. Separately, GOI officials have told us they are looking into the possibility of funding a new agricultural college in Afghanistan.

Civilian Assistance: Humanitarian Aid

¶5. (SBU) GOI humanitarian assistance focuses mainly on food aid. India supplies wheat that is processed into high-protein biscuits by the World Food Program and distributed to 2 million Afghan school children daily. During a January 2009 visit to Delhi by Afghan President Karzai, Prime Minister Singh announced with much fanfare a gift to Afghanistan of 250,000 metric tons of Indian wheat. One year later, the wheat remains undelivered. USG attempts to persuade Pakistan to allow shipment of the wheat through Pakistan have floundered, while the Indians and Afghans have not come to terms on the threshold issue of who will pay transportation costs, regardless of whether the wheat is shipped through Pakistan or Iran, in spite of USG efforts to broker an agreement. The GOI also provides funding to the Afghan Ministry of Health to build and maintain medical clinics.

Hands-Off Implementation

¶6. (C) Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao summed up the GOI approach to assistance implementation when she told SRAP Holbrooke on January 18 that India believes donors should "resist the temptation to micromanage" and instead help Afghans build institutions and let Afghans manage their country (Ref B). GOI officials tell us they rely heavily on Afghan government input at both the national and provincial levels when devising project scope and location: "they tell us what they need and where, and we help them make it happen." In most cases that do not involve scholarships or training grants, Indian assistance is provided in the form of direct cash transfers to Afghan ministries and institutions. Virtually all Indian aid is administered by Afghan ministries or international organizations with minimal oversight provided by Indian diplomats from the embassy in Kabul and

India's four consulates. MEA reports that a small number of Indian technical personnel are present in Afghanistan to work on the Salma dam project and electrical transmission projects.

Police Training

17. (C) As mentioned above, GOI officials report that a "handful" of Afghan police have been past beneficiaries of administration/management training in India along with other Afghan civil servants. Senior GOI interlocutors have told us over the past year that India is keenly interested in providing more training, particularly para-military training, to the Afghan police. The most recent such statement was made by then-National Security Advisor to SRAP Holbrooke during a January 18 meeting in which Narayanan said that India offers the best mix of civilian and para-military training required by the Afghan police (Ref C). Other GOI officials have told us they have discussed with Afghan officials the possibility of training female Afghan police officers and bomb disposal specialists, but no such training has yet taken place.

Military Assistance

18. (C) India also appears intent on increasing its so-far limited military assistance to Afghanistan. India currently provides a variety of training to Afghan National Army (ANA) personnel in various Indian Army training venues, including staff college. MEA officials told us the total number of past and present ANA beneficiaries of such training is 150, and that number is expected to rise. India has offered its Advanced Light Helicopter to Afghanistan as well as pilot training to the new Afghan air force. The GOI has provided cars and trucks to the Afghan military.

NEW DELHI 00000225 003 OF 003

Comment

19. (C) Afghanistan is the second-largest recipient of Indian aid (topped only by Bhutan, which has been economically dependent on India since colonial times) and this fact illustrates Afghanistan's relative importance to India. The GOI will likely continue to provide significant assistance to Afghanistan in the short and medium terms, and may even try to increase its bilateral ties -- particular on the security side -- as the international community begins to draw down its presence. Post has serious reservations and deep longer-term concerns regarding increased training in the military assistance areas by either India or Pakistan. This provides a sensitive area of potential conflict rather than cooperation, and introduces a "hedging mechanism" in the longer term. Our overall strategy on Indian engagement in Afghanistan should encourage greater coordination and mutual transparency to avoid duplicative, contradictory, and incompatible approaches and methods between Indian assistance/training and that provided by the USG and other international partners.

ROEMER